



Stanford eCorner

U.S. Leadership in Innovation

Meg Whitman, *Hewlett Packard Enterprise*

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Tech executive Meg Whitman talks about how America's long-held position as the most innovative country in the world is being threatened by the rise of China and other nations, and how "STEM" subjects must be taught more robustly to U.S. school-age children. "We are at the beginning of the revolution in science, technology, engineering and math — even though we're 50 years in," Whitman says.



Transcript

- I think, for much of the last century, we had undisputed competitive position in the world, but think about what has happened in the last three decades. The world has become flat, in the world of Tom Friedman. There are other populations around the United States that can do things cheaper and more effectively than we can. And I'm not sure that that's necessarily a bad thing because then we need to continue to invent and continue to invent new industries that employ the next generation of people. And so, my view is, we still are the most competitive nation in the world in terms of innovation. I mean, think about what we invent here, what is invented in other parts of the world. This is still, we are innovators at heart, and we still lead the world. That is not an assured thing, right. I mean, you think about what's happening in China and other places, that is threatened. And so we need to make sure that we are doubling down on education.

By the way, I think our higher education system in the United States is still second to none, but our K through 12 is not. And it's not just California, it is the entire country. And we need to fix that, and we need to make sure that we encourage people of all backgrounds and races and genders to focus, I think, if you have an aptitude for it, on science, technology, engineering, and math because we are at the beginning of the revolution of science, technology, engineering, and math, even though we're 50 years in. So I think we cannot take for granted, we've got to have, listen, I am for tax reform here, maybe not the one that's being put forward, we'll see what happens, but we do have to have competitive tax rates. I think we do have to have R and D tax credits. I think institutions, like the National Institute of Health, you know, like DARPA, I mean, these are really important things that need to get funded and need to be at the forefront of American competitiveness.